



The Insider

www.senate.mi.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

June 9, 2006

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

Mickey's Blog: House Bill 4118

This past Wednesday, the Legislature passed a series of bills to require high schools to adopt a policy regarding steroid use. The bills don't say what the policy should be, only that they make reference to how steroid use might affect a student's eligibility. How it might affect eligibility is left up to the local school district.

I supported the package of steroid bills. These bills represent a modest beginning. But I also offered an amendment because there is so much more we should be doing. I called on the Michigan Senate to be brave, to be bold, in the defense of our children and in our commitment to integrity.

Those of us who enjoy fair athletic competition got a wake up call recently with the growing steroid scandal in Major League Baseball. It should be clear to all that this scandal destroys the integrity of athletic competition, invalidates the achievements of individuals, and breaks faith with our ancestors by cheapening the statistical records that are the soul of the game. Steroids rob the health of the athletes who use them, and corrupt the youth of our nation by teaching them that:

- Cheating is OK
- that Illegal drugs are good
- that Winning trumps Fair Play
- And finally, that although the authorities talk the talk about steroids, they do not have the guts to enforce the rules because they're afraid to rock the boat.

The only way to guarantee fair competition and protect those athletes who obey the rules, from those who cheat and use steroids, is to provide for random testing.

If you think high school steroid use is not a significant problem, then you have your head in the sand. A Center for Disease Control report, based on a sample of 15,000 high school students, indicates 6% or 900 students had used steroids. 900! That is a truly shocking number.

I am disappointed with the Michigan High School Athletic Association, which is charged with the responsibility to maintain fair and honest competition in sports and stands as the guardian of our children against overzealous coaches and parents. Why have they not created their own testing program to expel the curse of steroids from the sports they regulate?

I suppose we shouldn't be surprised. The Association is as timid as the Major League Baseball Commissioner and Baseball Owners, who looked the other way for a decade while their sport was horribly corrupted. It took Congressional Hearings, Grand Jury Indictments, and the threat of government intervention to force them to belatedly clean their own house.

My friends, that is the choice we face today.

We have grossly failed our own children if we ignore the abuse of steroids.

My amendment established random testing for athletes who compete in state tournaments. We would pay for this testing by creating a \$1 surcharge on admissions to state tournament games. If we are not willing to fund random testing to police athletics, we are shouting to our children that a dollar is more important than integrity, fairness, and their own health.

We are shouting to them that a dollar is more important than good character.

We are shouting to them that they are saps for being honest, that those who cheat will beat them and get glory and scholarships and wealth and fame. We are telling them that if they want to succeed, they should use steroids too.

Our kids deserve better than that from us.

I cannot believe that this Senate, this State, and this Country would endorse such a perversion of our fundamental values.

My amendment failed, 21-17, but I got the support of all my fellow Democrats and one Republican. Two colleagues who voted against me came to me afterward and confided in me that I had spoken well, and that they think I am right, but that we need to build public support first before we mandate testing. Even the committee chair, in arguing against my amendment, conceded that we might have to add testing in the future if these bills are not successful in ending steroid abuse.

The Detroit News editorialized against the bills and against my proposal, calling steroid legislation empty gestures against substances few kids use.

I disagree. And so does the state of New Jersey. The same day we passed our bills, New Jersey became the first state in the nation to pass a law mandating random testing, nearly exactly the way I had proposed it for Michigan. Florida is predicted to follow next week, and California not far behind.

That same day, baseball pitcher Jason Grimsley of the Arizona Diamondbacks had his house raided after he admitted using steroids, amphetamines, and Human Growth Hormones (HGH).

He was released by the team the next day.

We owe it to our kids to establish and enforce strict rules about performance enhancing substances in sports. The sooner the better. What do you think? E-mail me some of your thoughts and I will publish some of your thoughts in the next *Insider*.

Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Various Times
(Comcast Channel 18)

*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

Coffee Hours

*Since my District Office is in Roseville, I do not have set coffee hours in Roseville. However, I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. Everyone is welcome to attend the coffee hours and discuss their issues and concerns.

June 26
7-9 p.m.

Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library
(40900 Romeo Plank)
Clinton Township

July 31
7-9 p.m.

Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library
(35891 Gratiot)
Clinton Township

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